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ABSTRACT

A study of student perceptions of the goals of composition classes and essential rules for successful academic compositions was conducted as a pilot for the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) writing project, which will collect data on instructional practices and other aspects of written composition. Students from three United States high schools and a comparable Australian school were asked to write a letter of advice to a younger student on how to write a composition on community improvement. A content analysis was performed on the letters, individual pieces of advice and their topics were listed, and a classification scheme was constructed based on the topics. The advice came under four major categories: (1) task demands, (2) reader impact, (3) writer demands, and (4) composition demands. The results indicated that the average number of pieces of advice per letter was higher for the advanced classes than for the intermediate or the introductory classes. Most of the advice and hints given by the advanced classes were about the composition itself, and task advice was mentioned least often. Surprisingly, there was little advice devoted to unity and coherence, especially in the U.S. schools. While there were many differences between schools across subcategories, when the U.S. classes were all combined and compared to the Australian class, there were striking similarities. (Extensive tables of the results and sample letters are included.) (HTH)

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Student Perceptions of Essential Rules for Successful Academic Compositions

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Introduction

Composition research is currently focusing on issues such as instructional practices in writing and the factors that influence learning outcomes. The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), for instance, has recently undertaken a study of these issues (1981). One of the goals of the IEA written composition study is to explore and describe the school curriculum in writing internationally. The data sources for this goal include a curriculum questionnaire, interviews and student essays. The IEA seeks information about written composition on an institutional level with investigations of (1) the official curriculum, (2) official examinations and official scoring systems: It also seeks information on a functional level by investigating (1) samples of tests used in the pilot sample schools during the whole school year, (2) teachers' perceptions of how much the curriculum affects their instruction in relation to other possible sources of influence, (3) students' perceptions of the objectives of composition and writing instruction. All of the data collected will provide information about the degree of match or mismatch between official, teachers' and students' objectives. In addition, the IEA study is interested in finding out teachers' and students' perceptions of good writing.

Examining student perceptions of the goals and criteria of written composition is an especially interesting and important aspect of the international writing project. Student perception data can help to uncover the "real" school curriculum for composition and what students think teachers value. But it will be necessary to determine whether the results found for

the goals and criteria are culture specific or universal. The methodological tool used to study student perceptions must be sufficiently valid, reliable, and easy to use: it must be quantifiable, "objective," and machine scorable. The methodological tool could be either a direct or an indirect technique to study student perceptions.

This paper is a report of a pilot methodological study of student perceptions of the goals of composition classes and essential rules for successful academic compositions. The study uses an indirect approach that hopefully is valid and reliable enough to be used by the IEA international writing project to collect data on instructional practices for written composition, school and teacher objectives, criteria for successful compositions and student knowledge about composition. The indirect technique asks students what they perceive as the requirements for a good grade in composition. A content analysis is then applied to their answers. This pilot methodological study attempts to discover how the method works in the United States and whether it could possibly be used both as a rated IEA task and a source of data. Data from seven U.S. schools and one Australian school will be compared.

Description and Rationale of the Student Perception Technique

The technique is a metacomposition task--writing a composition about composition. Students are given a composition assignment to do in class during a normal class period. The task is as follows:

> Write a letter of advice to a student two years younger than you who is planning to come to your school and has asked you to tell how to write a composition on the topic What should be done to

> improve my community that will get a good grade in your school. In your letter first briefly indicate five hints as to what you think teachers in your school find important in judging compositions. Illustrate them with a model composition on the topic What should be done to improve my community.

The letter is composed of two parts, the five hints for getting a good grade on the "What Should be Done to Improve My Community" topic and the illustration of the five hints in a model composition. This study will be concerned with the first part only.

The letter of advice to a younger student has several advantages as a methodological tool. It asks students to explicitly state rules for producing successful academic compositions, so it is a metacognitive task that taps what students know about composition. Part one with the five hints can be considered the "knowing that" part; and part two, the model composition, can be considered the "knowing how" part. The letter of advice tool can supplement think-aloud protocols, objective and essay tests, and self-reports as ways to assess students' composition knowledge and ability. It also permits the study of composition terminology use by students and what they think teachers value.

Because the letter is written by a student "expert" to a younger, non-expert, the letter is authentic, and rich with information about what the student has experienced in the composition class. The non-threatening letter of advice lends itself to pragmatic advice. The student "lets his hair down" and tells it as it really is. Student perceptions of how to get a good grade on a composition are second order descriptions--experiential

and interpretative descriptions of the qualitatively different ways in which the students perceive and understand their reality. The letter of advice is a way of seeing the meaning that students put into composition instruction. Because whatever students feel that they know contributes to their actions, beliefs and attitudes concerning composition, it is important to understand how students think about what they are taught and how they make use of the knowledge they have.

The letter of advice technique, then, is a qualitative research method that gives insights into the writing objectives that teachers seek to achieve in their classrooms, the methods they use in teaching composition, the criteria used in scoring and grading, the "real" curriculum for composition, student metacognition about composition, and student interpretations of composition.

Description of Student Samples in Different Schools

The student samples used for this study were taken from three high schools in the United States and a comparable Australian school. Two advanced composition classes at University High School, a school for gifted students attached to the Curriculum Laboratory of the University of Illinois, participated in the study (N = 40). Four classes at Central High School, a public high school in the same city, also participated: Advanced Rhetoric (N = 18), Grade 11 Composition (N = 25), and two Grade 10 composition classes (N = 57). Two classes at a rural high school, Oakwood, were also used: Journalism (N = 15) and Grammar and Composition (N = 10). The Australian school, Kilmaire College, had one composition class (N = 30). The students

at Kilmaire are comparable to grade 11 and 12 students in U.S. high schools. The sample consisted of composition classes from two urban high schools (a lab school and a public school) and one rural school in the U.S. and an urban Australian school. The composition classes were classified into three levels of complexity: advanced, intermediate, and introductory. The total advanced classes consisted of the Australian class, University High School (Uni) classes and Central Advanced Rheotric (Total N = 88). The intermediate classes consisted of Central Grade 11 composition, Oakwood Journalism, and Oakwood Grammar and Composition II classes (Total N = 50). The introductory classes consisted of two Central Grade 10 classes, 10A and 10B (Total N = 57).

Methodology of Content Analysis

The use of qualitative research methods such as the letter of advice about how to get a good grade requires content analysis techniques to help organize, analyze, and interpret the qualitative data. Krippendorff (1980) defines content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context" (p. 21). He adds, however, that two points should be kept in mind. First, messages do not have a single meaning. One piece of material may be looked at from numerous perspectives. Second, meaning need not be shared. Agreement on what a message means exists only for the most obvious aspects of communication or for a few people who happen to share the same cultural or sociopolitical perspective, which might not always be interesting. Each piece of material conveys the particular perspective of the communicator. Krippendorff concludes that ". . . any content analysis must be performed relative to and justified in terms of the context of the data" (p. 23).

A content analysis was performed on the letter of advice data from the seven U.S. schools and one Australian school based on Krippendorff's definition, keeping his caveats in mind. The following procedures were used to do the content analysis on the letter of advice.

1. Each letter of advice was read carefully, the individual pieces of advice listed and the topic (the "aboutness" of the advice) of each piece of advice noted and labeled.
2. A classification scheme was constructed based on the topic of each piece of advice. Fourteen subcategories were formed and then subsumed under four major categories that seemed to emerge from the data as patterns. The four major types and their subtypes are as follows:

    1. Task Demands Advice
        - Assignment
        - Format
        - Length
    2. Reader Impact Demands Advice
        - Appearance
        - Style/Tone
        - Content
    3. Writer Demands
        - Teacher politics
        - Composing/Class Attitudes
        - Content/Idea Source

4. Composition Demands Advice

   Structure/Development

   Mechanics

   Process

   Unity

   Coherence

The fourteen subtypes were further subdivided into more specific subtypes.

3. The advice for each student in a class was then classified into the appropriate subtype and major type.
4. For each class a total pieces of advice for each subtype and major type was obtained and a proportion computed for each subtype and major type.

The major and sub advice categories were constructed using labels developed by the researcher through an inductive process, where patterns were identified which emerged from the data rather than an imposed classification system. The specific subtypes consist of the recurrent particular terms used by the students to differentiate their hints and pieces of advice. The major and sub categories of advice are useful for descriptive purposes and for making interpretations about the nature of the composition curriculum, goals and priorities of teachers and students if they have passed the criteria of internal homogeneity, external heterogeneity and completeness. Internal homogeneity concerns the extent to which all items under a given category hold together. External heterogeneity concerns the differences

among categories: the differences should be clear enough so that data items will fit just one category. Completeness involves internal and external consistency, inclusiveness, reproducibility, and credibility by the students who provided the data (Guba, 1978).

Results

Table 1 shows that the average advice pieces per letter was higher for the advanced classes in the U.S. (9.0) and in Australia (9.9) than for the intermediate classes (7.4) or the introductory classes (5.8). The advanced classes gave more than the five hints asked for in the assignment. Many times students had embedded hints or pieces of advice. The tendency seems to be that the more students know about composition and the more advanced and complex their composition class, the more hints and advice they give. Here is an example of an advanced student giving more than the asked for five hints:

> . . . The safest way to get an "A" from Mrs. X is to [1]first find out what her view on the subject of the paper is. Agree with it. If you disagree, the grade is automatically lowered. [2]Supporting your arguement well is secondary. [3]So is knowing the material covered in the paper.
>
> [4]Another way to help insure a high grade from Mrs. X is to fill your paper with semi-technical language that she doesn't understand. If the paper, for instance, can deal with computers, use terms like "bits," "bytes," and 42K RAM." Use these terms as if they were normal words, and only a fool would not know what they meant. [5]Knowing what the expressions mean, and [6]using them correctly are, of course, secondary.

It may be more important to agree with the teacher, but [7]if you can support her viewpoint with the argument she uses, do so. It will help you if you make any errors in spelling, grammar or whatever. If you don't know--or don't remember--what her argument for her viewpoint was, or if it was just the ol "that is so: end of discussion" argument, then it can be [8]useful to support your argument well. I mean really well. It might make up for not using the argument she likes.

[9]Never ever try to be humorous in a paper, unless the assignment told you specifically to be humorous. Mrs. X has a very limited sense of humor. It could be argued that it is nonexistant.

[10]Finally, try to use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation. It may change your grade from a "B" to an "A-." It is not as important as the other things, but it is still important.

This letter would be counted as having ten pieces of advice.

Summary Table 2 makes clear that most of the advice and hints given by the advanced classes were about the composition itself (.63) and the task advice was mentioned least often (.05). Reader Impact Advice was mentioned more often (.19) than Writer Advice (.13). There were some important differences between the Australian school, Kilmaire, and the U.S. schools. Kilmaire gave much more Reader Impact Advice (.26), more Writer Advice (.18) but less composition advice (.54) and task advice (.02). Uni High had the highest composition advice proportion of all schools (.65), almost twice as much Reader Impact Advice (.21) as Writer Advice (.11) and only (.03) task advice, while Central had over twice

as much task advice (.07), about equal amounts of Reader Impact and Writer Advice (.16) and (.17). The Advanced classes had a lower porportion of Task, Reader Impact, and Writer Advice than the Intermediate and Introductory classes and a higher proportion of composition advice.

Table 3 indicates that the highest proportion of Task Advice was Format Advice for the advanced classes. Format Advice includes items: ink, type ((.05) for Central), title page. The highest proportion for Reader Impact Advice was for Style/Tone (.13). This was close to the Introductory amount (.15) but much lower than the Intermediate proportion of (.21). Appearance had a proportion of (.04), similar to the Intermediate (.03) but much lower than the Introductory (.10). For Writer Advice, the proportions for Teacher Politics (.05) and for Content/Idea Source (.06) were about equal, while the Composing/Class attitudes amount was only (.01) in contrast to the Intermediate (.05) and Introductory (.04). The Intermediate and Introductory classes had a teacher politics proportion of (.05) also. The Advanced and Introductory classes both had a proportion of (.06) for Content/Idea Source, while the Intermediate classes had almost twice that (.11).

Most of the composition advice given by the advanced students was for Structure/Development (.55). This is more than double the proportion for the Intermediate and Introductory classes, (.16) each. The advanced classes are similar to the other levels for Mechanics: (.16) (.17) and (.20). Process is also similar: Advanced (.08), Intermediate (.06) and Introductory (.05). Unity was mentioned much less than Process, Mechanics, or Structure/Development. The advanced and Intermediate classes both had (.02) amounts

and the Introductory had .03. Coherence was mentioned infrequently, also. The Advanced classes (.01), the Intermediate (.02) and Introductory below (.01). The Australian class had (.30) for Structure/Development, only (.10) for Mechanics, (.07) for Process, (.03) for Unity, and (.06) for Coherence. The big differences were the increased proportion for Coherence and the lower proportion for Mechanics for the Australian class. Kilmaire seemed close to Intermediate Oakwood II in the amounts for Mechanics and Coherence.

Table 3 indicates that Format advice is important at Central High School, Appearance is important to introductory students, Length is important at Oakwood II Intermediate, Style/Tone is important at Oakwood II Intermediate, Teacher Politics is more important on the less advanced levels, Composing/ Class attitude are important on the Intermediate level, as is Content/Idea Source advice. The lower the complexity level, the less important Structure/ Development and Process becomes, but the more important Mechanics becomes.

Tables 4 and 5 give information about major and sub advice types according to the composition class setting--whether it is in the U.S. or Australia, urban or rural, and public or lab school.

According to Table 4 the Australian school, Kilmaire is similar to UNI High School and Oakwood II College Bound in that little attention is given to Task advice. (.02). Kilmaire students devote quite a bit of their advice to Reader Impact (.26) about the same proportion as Oakwood Journalism (.25) and Uni High, Central II, Central 10A (each .21) l and Central 10B (.31). Central Advanced with only (.16) and Oakwood II College Bound with (.44) are quite different in their focus on Reader Impact Advice. Kilmaire

students had a (.18) proportion for Writer Advice, about the same amount as Central Advanced, Central 10B (.17) Central 10A (.19) and Oakwood Journalism (.21). Uni High (.11) and Oakwood II College Bound (.10) were much lower and Central II (.27) was much higher. For Composition Advice, Kilmaire with (.54) was similar to Central Advanced (.59), between the high Uni High proportion of (.65) and the low Oakwood Journalism of (.39). If the U.S. schools are combined, we find a close similarity between the Australian school and the U.S. schools according to summary Table 2. With the exception of Task Advice with a five point difference, there are only a few points difference between Kilmaire and the U.S. schools for Reader Impact, Writer, and Composition Advice proportions.

It is difficult to generalize about urban and rural U.S. schools because there is so much variation between classes in the same school. It seems that the rural Oakwood School is higher in Reader Impact Advice and lower in composition advice then the urban U.S. schools. Urban public Central High School appears to stress Task and Writer Advice more than other school (except for Oakwood Journalism).

Table 5 gives information about the subtype advice for the different school settings. The Task subtypes for Task Advice are Assignment, Format, and Length. Kilmaire, Central, and Oakwood classes all have (.02) for Assignment advice while Uni High has less than (.01). Kilmaire had no Format advice while Central had (.05), Uni High (.01) and Oakwood (.02). Students at Kilmaire also had no advice about Length while Oakwood students had a proportion (.04), Uni students (.01) and Central students (.02).

The Reader Impact Advice subtypes are Appearance, Style/Tone, and Content. Kilmaire had a proportion of less than (.01) while Uni High and Oakwood had (.04) and Central had (.06). For Style/Tone, Kilmaire had (.25) and Oakwood had (.24) while Uni High had (.14) and Central had (.15). Kilmaire had (.01) for Content as did Central. Uni High was similar with (.02) and Oakwood a little higher with (.03). The Writer Advice subtypes are Teacher Politics, Composing/Class Attitudes, and Content/Idea Source. Teacher Politics accounted for (.07) of Kilmaire and Central advice, but only (.04), for Uni High and (.03) for Oakwood. Kilmaire had (.01) for Composing/Class Attitudes, but Central had (.05) and Oakwood had (.04) while Uni High had none. There were similar proportions for Content/Idea Source for all schools: Kilmaire (.09), Uni High (.06), Central (.08) and Oakwood (.09). The Composition subtypes are Structure/Development, Mechanics, Process, Unity, and Coherence. Kilmaire had a high proportion of Structure/Development Advice (.30) but Uni High an even higher (.39) while Oakwood had a low (.11) and Central fell in between with (.20). Mechanics did not seem as important in Kilmaire (.10) as in U.S. schools, for Oakwood had (.20), Central (.18) and Uni (.14). All schools were similar with Process proportions: Kilmaire (.07), Uni (.08), Central (.06) and Oakwood (.04). Unity proportions were close also: Kilmaire (.03), Uni, Central and Oakwood (.02). Kilmaire had much more Coherence advice (.06) than U.S. schools: Uni and Central (.01) and Oakwood (.03). One of the suprises in doing this study was the finding that so little advice was devoted to unity and coherence, especially in the U.S. schools.

Tables 6, 7, 8, and 9 break down the major and sub types of advice into more specific subtypes. For these tables each class will be discussed separately as to the specific subtypes of advice given. Table 6 gives the proportion of Task Advice according to composition classes. The Australian class at Kilmaire gave task advice about understanding the assignment (.01) and complying strictly with it answering the question, writing 3-5 paragraphs or 1½ - 4 pages, and making it lengthy for a total of (.03). Uni High gave task advice about complying strictly with the assignment, using ink (.01), typing, 3-5 paragraphs, 200-500 words, and making it lengthy for a total of (.03). Central advanced gave advice about complying strictly with the assignment, having a title page (.01), typing (.05), and 1½ - 4 pages for a total of (.07). Intermediate Oakwood Journalism gave advice about doing the assignment/bringing paper supplies to class to do it, doing all of the assignment turning it in on time, doing it in class if given class time, having a title page (.01), using ink or typing, 200-500 words and making it lengthy (.05) for a total of (.14). Intermediate Oakwood II had advice about using ink (.01). Intermediate Central II had advice about complying strictly with the assignment (.01), proper margins (.01), lined up, indented paragraphs, ink, 200-500 words, 1½ - 4 pages, and making it lengthy for a total of (.05). Introductory Central 10A advised asking for clarification if unsure about the assignment, doing the assignment/brining proper supplies to class, complying strictly with the assignment, turning it in on time (.02), not having fringe on the paper, putting on the students' name, date, class, using ink (.01) or typing (.01), having the correct amount of work/ pages, writing as much as possible, making it lengthy, and having paragraphs

of two or more sentences for a total of (.12). Introductory Central 108 gave advice about complying strictly with the assignment (.01), not having fringed paper, using one side of the paper only, having proper headings (.01), having lined-up, indented paragraphs, using ink (.02) or typing (.01), and making it lengthy for a total of (.10).

Information about the Impact on Reader advice was given in Table 7. The Appearance subtype concerns neatness and legibility. Tone/Style/Expression also includes vocabulary advice. Content advice includes advice about interest, relevance, and importance. Kilmaire gave advice about neatness, proper tone (.01), using humor, having a serious tone (.01), sounding sincere, being firm/positive, objective, giving both sides of an issue, being concerned with the reader (.02), formal, style/presentation (.02), concise, clear/explantory (.04), non-repetitive (.01), genre appropriate/expository, feeling/expressive, being explicit/direct, consistent, controlled, using an appropriate vocabulary, being precise/using dictionary, thesaurus, using a mature/technical vocabulary, (.01) using a simple/plain vocabulary (.02) and having interesting relevant content (.01) for a total of (.26) Impact on Reader advice.

Uni High gave advice about neatness (.02) and legibility (.02), not using humor, being sincere, non-radical, reader-based, formal, being concerned about style presentation (.01), concise and non-wordy (.02), clear and explantory (.01) having feeling and being lively, colorful, being original/imaginative (.01), explicit/direct, consistent, using active-voice, variety (.01), using precise vocabulary/dictionary, thesaurus, using

an extensive vocabulary, a mature/technical vocabulary and having content that is interesting, relevant and important (.02) for a total of (.21).

Central advanced had advice about neatness (.02), legibility, being objective/giving both sides, semi-formal, concise (.01), clear, explantory, (.01), non-repetitive, lively/colorful/imagable (.01), original, explicit, direct, using active voice (.01), varied (.01), using an appropriate vocabulary (.01), being precise/use dictionary, thesaurus, using a mature/ technical vocabulary, and having interesting/relevant content (.01) for a total of (.16).

Intermediate Oakwood Journalism gave advice about neatness (.03), legibility (.02), being objective/giving both sides, being reader-based, having good style/presentation (.02), being concise (.02), clear/explantory (.03), lively/colorful/imagable (.02), original/imaginative (.02), even, and having interesting/relevant content (.14) for a total of (.25).

Intermediate Oakwood II College Bound had some advice about neatness (.01), legibility (.01), being reader-based (.03), concise (.11), clear/ explanatory (.04) non-repetitive, being lively/colorful/imagable (.10) non-repetitive (.02) genre appropriate/expository (.01) original (.01), using an appropriate vocabulary (.01), using precise words/dictionary, thesaurus (.03) and having interesting/relevant content (.01) for a total of (.44).

Intermediate Central II gave advice about neatness (.01), legibility (.01), using third person only (.02), being formal, concise (.03), clear/ explantory (.03), non-repetitive, lively/colorful (.04), orignal/imaginative,

explicit/direct, consistent, using active voice (.01), using an appropriate vocabulary (.01), being precise (.01), and having interesting, relevant content, for a total of (.21).

Introductory Central 10A gave advice about legibility (.10) being realistic/reasonable, concise, clear/explantory (.01), non-repetitive (.01), having feeling/expressiveness (.01), being original/imaginative (.03), using an appropriate vocabulary (.01), using a mature technical vocabulary and having interesting/relevant content (.01) for a total of (.21).

Introductory Central 10B also stressed advice about legibility (.10), being humorous, reader-based, formal (.01), having style/presentation, being concise (.01), clear/explantory (.04), non-repetitive (.01), having feeling, being lively/colorful, original/imaginative (.02), explicit/direct (.02), varied, having an appropriate vocabulary, precise/use dictionary/ thesaurus (.02), mature/technical, and interesting/relevant content (.01) for a total of (.31).

Table 8 is the proportion of specific subtypes of writer advice and includes advice about teacher politics, attitudes towards composition and the composition class, and the content of the composition. The Australian class had advice about knowing teacher expectations (.01), teacher beliefs/ desires/values (.02), agreeing with the teacher's stance (.01), impressing the teacher (.01), being broad and general (.01), not being radical or using words radical revolution, not writing any tear-jerkers unless teacher likes them, not leaving loopholes in the argument, being positive about learning, putting effort into the composition, allowing enough time for quality, choosing a topic the student believes in, using personal experience

and views (.01), using other people, books, library/research (.03), not copying or plagiarizing (.01), makign bold assertions, not contradicting yourself, and arguing both sides of an argument (.02) for a total of (.18) Writer Advice.

Uni High mentioned knowing teacher expectations/idiosyncracies, teacher beliefs, desires, values, picking a topic interacting to the teacher, impressing the teacher and being political, using no humor or jokes (.01), pretending teacher knows all the answers, opposing teacher tactfully. Being specific or narrow enough to be interesting to the teacher, getting teacher to like you, choosing a topic interesting to you, choosing a topic that makes you look good, choosing a safe topic, knowing the subject well (.02), using own personal expeirences and views (.01) making up content, not copying or plagiiarizing, and faking interest for a total of (.11).

Central Advanced gave advice about knowing the teacher's personality teacher expectations/idiosyncracies (.01), teacher beliefs, desires, values (.01), impressing the teacher/being political (.01), imitating and modeling the teacher, being vague, and general, letting teacher know your weak points, faking sophistication and using a primer style, expecting differences between English teachers and other teachers, being positive and serious about learning, putting effort into work/trying your best (.01), allowing enough time for quality, not rebelling against criticism, choosing a topic interesting to you, knowing the subject well (.02), using your own personal experience and views, using other people and books as resources, not copying or plagiarizing, defining words if a literature essay, making bold assertive, and not contradicting yourself for a total of (.17).

Intermediate Oakwood Journalism mentioned advice about knowing the teacher's personality, picking a topic interesting to the teacher, listening to the teacher, taking notes on the teacher's lecture, not arguing with the teacher, putting effort into the work (.02), allowing enough time for quality (.02), using classtime wisely, choosing a topic interesting to you, knowing the subject well (.02), using own personal experience, views, using other peoples, books, library/research (.02), using recent sources, not copying or plagiarizing, and not contradicting yourself (.02), for a total of (.21).

Intermediate Oakwood II College Bound gave advice about knowing teacher beliefs, desires, and values (.01), allowing enough time for quality, choosing a topic interesting to you (.01), knowing the subject well (.01), using recent sources (.01), and being non-phoney (.02) for a total of (.10).

Intermediate Central II had advice about knowing teacher expectations (.02), teacher beliefs, desires, values (.01), picking a topic interesting to teacher, being nice to the teacher, asking teacher for advice/help (.01), not "conning" the teacher with fancy words, getting the teacher to like you, considering teacher and student interests 50/50, being positive, serious about learning, putting effort into work/trying your best (.04), using class time wisely, budgeting time for in-class essays, pretending interest in the class even if dull, choosing a topic interesting to you (.01), knowing the subject well (.03), using own personal experiences, views (.01), using other people, books, library/research (.05), not copying, plagiarizing, using commonsense and the obvious if unsure of topic, and being only moderately competent if topic is bland for a total of (.17).

Introductory Central 10A gave advice about being nice to the teacher (.01), not arguing with the teacher or being a snot, not acting as an equal or being superior to the teacher, being positive, serious about learning (.03), putting effort into work/trying your best (.01), allowing enough time for quality (.01) knowing the subject well (.03), using own personal experience, views (.01), using other people, books, library (.03), not copying, plagiarizing (.01), and being non/phoney or faking interest for a total of (.19).

Introductory Central 10B had advice about knowing the teacher personality (.01), knowing teacher beliefs, desires, values, agreeing with the teachers stance (.01), inpressing the teacher, faking sophistication, being vogue, general, and broad (.01), being specific enough for interest, talking in circles and saying nothing, not being radical, not mentioning political parties (.01), being positive, serious about learning, putting effort into work and trying your best (.01), choosing a topic that makes you look good (.01), knowing the subject well, using own personal experiences, views, using other people, books, library (.01), and not copying, plagiarizing for a total of (.17).

The proportion of Composition Advice is given in Table 9. Subtypes are Structure/Development (further subdivided into Single Thesis, Preview Plan, Introduction, Body, Conclusion), Mechanics (Punctuation, Spelling Grammar/Usage), Process, Unity and Coherence. The Australian class, Kilmaire, had composition advice about structure/order (.02), single thesis main idea, theme, preview of composition/plan (.02), introduction (.02), catchy introduction, introduction of topic/definition (.01), introduction

of thesis, body, main ideas/thesis support (.02), major support paragraphs, strongest point last/arrangement, one main idea in a paragraph/topic sentence (.02), strong adequate evidence/details (.02), specific examples (.01), appropriate examples (.01), quotes/comparisons (.01), sound reasons (.01), accurate facts; conclusion (.01), summarize/restate conclusion (.01), extend thesis in conclusion, a synthesizing conclusion, proper, varied sentence structure (.01), punctuation (.03), spelling (.03), grammar/usage (.03), brainstorm, list ideas (.01), outline (.02), multiple drafts (.02), another's critique, stick to topic/thesis (.03), transition, and logical (.02) for a total of (.54).

Uni High had composition advice about structure/order (.05), single thesis (.06), preview of composition/plan (.01), introduction, catchy introduction, introduction of topic/definition, introduction of thesis (.02), body (.01), main ideas/thesis support (.02), major support paragraphs, strongest point last/arrangement, one main idea in paragraph/topic sentence (.01), strong adequate evidence/details (.03), specific examples (.04), appropriate examples, sound reasons (.01), accurate facts, conclusion (.01), summarize/restate conclusion (.01), extend thesis conclusion (.01), synthesizing conclusion, punctuation (.03), spelling (.04), grammar/usage (.05), avoid verb/parallel structure/conjunction problems, avoid ambiguities, misplaced words, brainstorm, list ideas, select/narrow topic, outline (.02), incubation, multiple drafts (.02), revision, proof-read/edit (.01), stick to topic/thesis (.02), transition, and flow of ideas for a total of (.65).

Central Advanced gave advice for structure/order (.04), single thesis (main idea, theme) (.03) preview of composition/plan, introduction (.01),

catchy introduction, introduction of topic/definition (.01), introduction of thesis, body (.01), main ideas/thesis support (.01), major support paragraphs, strongest point last/arrangement, based personal experience, based on experts outside school, one main idea in paragraph/topic sentence (.01), specific examples (.02), accurate facts (.01), conclusion (.01), memorable/twist conclusion, summarize/restate conclusion (.01), extend thesis conclusion (.01), proper, varied sentence structure (.01), punctuation (.06), spelling (.06), grammar/usage (.02), avoid verb/parallel structure conjunction problems (.01), avoid ambiguities, misplaced words, brainstorm, list ideas, select/narrow thesis (.03), outline (.01), multiple drafts (.01), another's critique (.01), proofread/edit (.02), stick to topic/thesis (.01), transitions (.01), and flow of ideas for a total of (.59).

Intermediate Oakwood Journalism gave advice for structure/order (.02), strong adequate evidence/details (.02), proper, varied sentence structure, punctuation (.07), spelling (.09), grammar/usage (.08), avoid verb/parallel structure problems (.02), outline, multiple drafts, another's critique, and proofread/edit (.02) for a total of (.39).

Intermediate Oakwood II gave advice on structure/order (.01), single main idea, theme (.01), strong, adequate evidence/details (.04), sound reasons (.01), accurate facts (.01), memorable/twist conclusion (.01), proper, varied sentence structure (.07), punctuation (.01), spelling (.01), grammar/usage (.07), outlining (.01), proofread/edit (.01) stick to topic/thesis (.03), transition (.01), and flow of ideas (.06) for a total of (.43).

Intermediate Central II gave advice for structure/order (.03), single main idea, theme (.03), catchy introduction (.01), introduction of

topic/definition, introduction of thesis, body, main ideas/thesis support (.01), major support paragraphs, strong, adequate evidence/details (.03), minor support, sound reasons, accurate facts, memorable/twist conclusion (.01), summarize/restate conclusion (.01), synthesizing conclusion (.01), sentence structure (.01), punctuation (.05), spelling (.03), grammar usage (.04), avoid verb/parallel structure/conjunction problems, ask questions (.01), think/prepare (.01), decide on an approach, outline (.01), multiple drafts, revision, proofread/edit (.02), stick to topic/thesis (.02), transitions, and flow of ideas (.01) for a total of (.46).

Introductory Central 10A had advice about structure/order (.04) single main idea, theme, introduction (.02), body, based experts outside of school, one main idea in a paragraph/topic sentence, strong, adequate evidence/details (.03), minor support, personal examples, accurate facts, conclusion (.01), summarize/restate conclusion, synthesizing conclusion, sentence structure (.02), punctuation (.05), spelling (.11), grammar/usage (.05), outline, multiple drafts, proofread/edit (.02), stick to topic (.03), and logical for a total of (.48).

Introductory Central 10B had advice for a catchy introduction, introduction of topic/definition (.01), body, strong evidence, specific examples (.01), sound reasons, accurate facts (.02), conclusion, summarize/restate conclusion (.01), proper, varied sentence structure (.03), punctuation (.06), spelling (.08), grammar/usage (.03), avoid verb problems, brainstorm/list ideas, think/prepare (.01), select/narrow main idea, multiple drafts, proofread/edit (.03), stick to topic (.02), and transitions for a total of (.41).

Discussion: Composition Class Characteristics and Curriculum

This section of the study will attempt to interpret the data and discuss the characteristics of each composition class, illustrating each class with a typical letter of advice that gives the flavor of the objectives, real curriculum, criteria, student perceptions and use of composition terminology.

Advanced Kilmaire. The characteristics of this class are (1) Thinking ahead before beginning to write and answering the question asked in the assignment; (2) an emphasis on tone and style; (3) being clear, straightforward, direct and explanatory; (4) using a precise, simple but mature vocabulary; (5) an emphasis on the reader; (6) using con-pro argumentation; (7) relying on other people as resources as well as personal experience and views; (8) mechanics; (9) logic; and (10) not discussing one idea only but multiple main ideas.

Dear Student,

Logic and practicality of ideas are essential when writing a composition with such a topic concerning, not individuals, but groups and people in general. Initially, you should formulate clear and sound ideas, both ideas concerning yourself and the welfare of others. It is vital you have some knowledge and awareness of the causes, effects, and possibly, solutions to these ideas. Personal opinion must be incorporated as the whole essay is a conglomeration of your ideas but, you must remember the audience to whom you are appealing and the subject on which you are writing: you must offer points which others, too, would consider relevant.

Your essay must be set out logically so to enable the reader to follow your ideas through. A good point to remember,

if skilled in writing, is to try to involve the reader someway--
A way by which to keep them interested and thinking, not in a
way to offend them. You must present your ideas clearly and in
a straightforward manner but, keeping this in mind, elaborate
(intelligently) on them using complex, but understandable, speech.
It is most important that you, as author of this piece of prose,
present <u>your</u> ideas--ideas you believe in not those you believe your
teacher agrees with--if only to preserve your sanity and self-
esteem. Good Luck!

<u>Advanced Uni High</u>. At Uni High the following characteristics emerged from the data: (1) a concern for neatness and legibility; (2) using personal experience as support; (3) a concern for structure/order, a single thesis, (4) specific examples; (5) mechanics; (6) a 5 paragraph essay with topic and thesis introduced in the introduction, a 3 paragraph body with a paragraph devoted to a major support point and a conclusion that summarizes and extends the thesis; (7) being interesting and original; (8) agreeing with teacher and being non-radical; (9) using an extensive, mature vocabulary; (10) being concise. The students at Uni seemed to promote insincerity and teacher psychology. The typical handbook rules seem to be taught such as use a variety of sentence openers, do not use passive voice regardless of whether they served a necessary function for coherence. Context and readers did not appear to be stressed much. Students at Uni used a technical composition vocabulary in their letter of advice.

Dear Susie,

Having been at Uni for four years now, I've written many
compositions and I think I can give you some hints that are
important to the teachers of UNI when they read a composition.

First of all, be as neat as possible and if possible, type your paper. For me, this always seemed to help as teachers are more receptive to a paper when it's easily read and neatly done. Secondly, always write a first draft before you make your final copy. This way you can weed out any awkward phrases and spelling and grammar mistakes. Sometimes the difference between an interesting paper that's well written technicallyand one that's not can make a difference of a grade. My third suggestion is that you make your paper as interesting as you can, preferably write on a subject you know about. This is something that all my teachers have said: they want a paper to catch <u>their</u> interest and it's more likely to, if you write on something you yourself are interested in. As for form, most teachers like the five paragraph paper. This includes an introduction where you present your topic and your ideas on it, and state your thesis. In the next three paragraphs you support your thesis, and the last paragraph is the conclusion where you tie your paper together. Finally, all my teachers have stressed the importance of the use of evidence, preferably specific evidence based on personal experience, in the support paragraphs of your paper. By this I mean, if you want to make a point, be able to back it up and support it with proof. I hope I haven't scared you too much. Don't worry, after a few compositions, you'll be an old pro.

<u>Advanced Central</u>. Central is characterized by (1) a concern for mechanics; (2) a concern for process; (3) emphasis on structure/order; (4) having a single thesis; (5) typing; (6) neatness; (7) teacher politics; (8) composing/class attitudes; (9) researching the topic; (10) giving more than the five hints or pieces of advice asked for. Although some of the students used a technical composition terminology, many others did not. Like Uni Advanced Central emphasizes the composition advice rather than the Impact on Reader and Writer Advice.

Friend:

Having weathered nearly four years of high school English courses, I believe that I have enough background in composition writing to advise you in the matter of getting good grades on such papers.

Perhaps the first thing that high school teachers notice, conciously or unconsciously, is the neatness of the paper you are submitting. Try to write legibly, or, if possible, type. The typed paper can hardly be messy, and if a young student such as yourself types, the teacher will think that you want a good grade; this initiative factor is important.

A second note might be in the structure of the composition. Paragraphs, when run together, give an impression of confused lack of organization. Pay particular attention to single ideas in each paragraph. It helps to use an outline, with each topic separated and distinguished from the others.

The most important sentence of any composition is the thesis, or topic sentence. Put this sentence as clearly as you can; omit words which haze or cloud over the point which you are trying to get across. When in doubt, cut out wordy, run on phrases in the thesis. If you do not, you run the risk of boring the reader.

The composition is, in essence, an argument. Use concrete, provable evidence when expressing your point of view. Concession of points of the opposition can help keep the reader listening. Do not take a "I'm always right" point of view. Be open minded; you are trying to learn something.

Lastly, don't be rebellious when constructive criticism is given to you. If you give the teacher the impression that you hate him or her, they can't help but reflect your emotion, unless the teacher is God-like.

Good Luck,

Intermediate Oakwood Journalism. This class is atypical because it concentrates on a specific type of composition. Their assignments are shorter than the other classes (from 100-150 words) and are not argumentative essays such as the advanced classes, but straight news stories, feature articles, critiques of columns or videotapes and occasional opinion columns. What characterizes this class is (1) a lack of focus on the composition advice for structure/development; (2) an emphasis on mechanics; (3) emphasis on research for the topic; (4) an emphasis on task advice, especially the length; (5) Reader Impact advice-appearance and interesting content; (6) Writer advice--content; (7) emphasis on neatness; (8) legibility; (9) lack of a technical composition vocabulary; (10) informal tone.

> Dear Morris:
>
> I can sympathize with your problems in coming to a new school and all. It must be rough to be suddenly displaced from all that is familiar and beloved and then thrust into an alien world. You have asked me what hints I could give you as to how to deal with your new English teacher. So you have Miss X, huh? Ha-ha.
>
> You will find these hints very helpful in dealing with this . . . teacher. First, do your assignments, no matter how personally distasteful or boring they may be. Second, no back talk or you may find yourself missing parts of your anatomy. Third, actually try to inject something relevant into your composition. Fourth, use your best grammar or your paper will end up looking like a red-slashed battlefield. And fifth, no matter how much bull you have to throw, keep it LONG!

As for the specifics of the topic you are writing about, tie in your basic theme throughout the paper. Don't go wandering off on tangents; keep to the basic idea of the theme. If you have an irrelevant sentence or even an unneeded paragraph, you can bet your life that it will fall under the vicious strokes of that red pen.

Actually have some idea of what you're writing about. The more you know, the more you can write, and thus fulfill the length requirement. Research the topic a little before you begin. Know your subject!

Make your suggestions somewhat valid. Do not suggest that your community should impose the death penalty for loitering. Miss X frowns upon such humorous touches. Keep your proposed solutions halfway sensible.

With these little tips and hints you should get a good grade. Hope you can rise to the occasion, Morris. See you around,

Intermediate Oakwood II College Bound. This class is characterized by (1) a focus on proper, varied sentence structure; (2) descriptive, sensory writing; (3) lack of task advice; (4) lack of writer advice; teacher politics and composing/class attitudes; (5) lack of punctuation and spelling advice; (6) an emphasis on coherence-continuity and flow of ideas; (7) a stress on being yourself; (8) relating to the audience; (9) using precise words, dictionary and thesaurus; (10) being concise. Like the Oakwood Journalism class, no attention is given to essay structure: thesis, introduction, body, or conclusion, but strong, adequate evidence/details is emphasized.

Dear Friend,

First of all, I would like to give you five hints that might help you with your composition. They are five hints that my composition teacher would find important: (1) In your composition

try to include a lot of detail. However, don't waste words, or try to make it flowery. Keep your details concise yet very informative. (2) Make your piece of writing come to life. Using all of the senses will best make this come about. Also, in making it come to life, your structure must flow. The sentences and paragraphs must easily connect, perhaps by taking a thread of information from the preceding sentence to the next. (3) Make your composition interesting. Many things contribute to how interesting a piece of writing is. For instance, here are a few: don't use repetition, make it lively, don't fluff it up with too much definition and detail, but be very descriptive. (4) Write your paper in regard to your audience. In other words, if you're writing for children, keep word levels to their understanding. Also, if you're writing a report; it is denotative; if not, its connotative.

With these hints in mind, you should be able to create a good composition.

Intermediate Central II. The characteristics noted for this class were (1) using other people, books, or library for research rather than relying on personal experience for support; (2) an emphasis on attitude about the composition class and composing; (3) knowing the subject well; (4) a lack of advice for interesting, relevant content; (5) being careful to answer the question in the assignment; (6) an emphasis on writer advice; (7) an emphasis on using third person only and active voice; (8) knowing teacher expectations; (9) asking the teacher for advice/help; (10) putting effort into the composition.

To Whom it May Concern:

As an incoming student of Champaign Central High School, I deem it necessary for you to know what to expect concerning

evaluation of compositions. In my third year at Central, I have had numerous experiences with numerous instructors. With these teachers' varying opinions and values, I have actually pinpointed elements in student writing which teachers agree on.

Although grammar is an obvious necessity for strong structure, I find that teachers rely on it less and less when it comes to lowering grades. Being in higher ranking classes may give a much different perspective, but the most important element is thinking in the abstract. Sure you can <u>just</u> get by by reading the required amount, but the extra effort and intense interpretation really pay off in the end. All teachers will have their idiosyncracies. One of the biggest parts in being a student is adapting to the instructors wants and needs! All of the previously mentioned suggestions can be accomplished with a good strong effort but if <u>you</u> are not satisfied with <u>your</u> writing than why should anyone else be? Pleasing myself has been one of the hardest things to do. Avoiding passive voice, excluding first or second person, and still making every sentence relate to the one before it.

If you were given a topic <u>What should be done to improve my community,</u> your major point should be revealed and proven with new ideas throughout the essay.

<u>Introductory Central 10A</u>. The tenth grade students in this class use a non-technical vocabulary for discussing composition, their hints are general rather than particular, more pragmatic. Their hints and advice indicate the objective are to teach them responsibility such as not copying, but doing their own writing, turning assignments in on time, using pen, being neat, not being argumentative in class etc. It is clear that the teachers of tenth grades stress neatness, mechanics, length, good classroom discipline, assignments finished, complete, and on time. Tenth graders

do not use the word thesis but may use opinion, major point, main idea, topic sentence, or theme instead. The tenth grade students seem more interested in the topic, less phoney and more genuine. Central 10A advice was characterized by (1) task advice, especially assignment and format advice; (2) legibility advice; (3) originality; (4) little tone/style advice; (5) being positive and serious about learning to write; (6) spelling; (7) a lack of coherence advice; (8) few words spent on giving the advice and hints; (9) having correct sentence structure; (10) knowing the topic well.

Dear Alise,

In two years you'll be coming to Central, well it's a big change from the school you go to now. It's a lot bigger and you're not as much a part of a family as you are now. You'll be more like part of the crowd. But the teachers are nice and don't grade unfairly, well at least the ones I've come across don't. I have heard some stories about unfair teachers but you can't really believe that. I have thought up five points that I think will help you in your composition: (1) your attitude should be good and have a open mind ready for new ideas. Be friendly, don't be a snot to the teacher or he (she) will not think you are trying hard and won't put himself out to help you. (2) Do research. The teachers here are good and will help you locate books and things that will help you to get a background on the community. (4) Put in a few of your own ideas that are original and sound like they are good and from you. Put others ideas in your composition, too, but don't take the credit for it. Don't say anything that you don't mean, don't say that you are going to volunteer your services and not mean it. (5) Lastly--write neatly and clearly. Have someone proof-read your paper for spelling or other mistakes. Make sure your paper looks good and turn it in on time! OK, there are the five points.

Introductory Central 10B. The Central 10B class is very similar to Central 10A class. The 10B class is characterized by more Reader Impact Advice--more emphasis on being clear/explantorv, being explicit/direct, being precise. The 10B class used twice as much tone/style advice as the 10A class. It gave over three times as much teacher politics advice, but half as much composing/class attitude advise as the 10A class. There was less structure/development advice, more emphasis on accurate facts and process advice.

Dear Eighteth Graders:

Well now I am going to give you some information about how a teacher might look at the way you write a composition. And if you know you probably have a better chance at getting a good grade.

Well the first thing is weather you have your name in the proper place, the date, and the class. Then she's going to see if you have the right heading and if it in the right place. And if you indented your paragraphs, and have correct punctuation. And to see that you have a topic sentence, and a conclusion sentence. Then see to it that you stick to what your talking about and don't jump off the subject and start talking about something that happen in the first paragraph. A teacher would looked for neatness. Meaning don't hand in a wrinkled up composition or a half do composition. And make sure you spell as careful as you can and if you don't know how to spell a word ask or look it up in a dictionary. Think whats the best kind of composition you can have with just about correct everything and neatness. And write your composition with a positive attitude not with a negative if you do that your composition will come out like you think.

That just about all a teacher look for in a composition. So when you get to high school and the teacher ask you to write a composition and you write a composition like that then she'll know right away that you are a good writer and a good student.

Discussion: Differences and Similarities

Reading the letters of advice from seven different classes makes one aware of the class-specific composition objectives, criteria, and student perceptions. The task advice ranges from (.01) for Intermediate Oakwood II to (.14) for Intermediate Oakwood Journalism--quite a range for composition classes in the same high school! The Reader Impact Advice ranges from (.16) for Advanced Central to (.44) for Intermediate Oakwood II. And there is a fairly large difference between Central 10A (.21) and Central 10B (.31) for this major advice type. The Writer Advice ranges from (.10) for Intermediate Oakwood II to (.27) for Intermediate Central II. This is also a big difference for two intermediate classes, both grade II classes with students who have had supposedly the same kind of composition experiences in grades 9 and 10. The composition advice ranges from (.39) for Intermediate Oakwood Journalism to (.65) for Advanced Uni High School.

Yet, when the U.S. classes are all combined and compared to the Australian class, there are striking similarities. The task advice is (.02) for Kilmaire and (.07) for U.S. classes. The Reader Impact advice is (.26) for Kilmaire and (.23) for U.S. classes. The Writer Advice is (.18) for Kilmaire and (.17) for U.S. classes. The composition advice is (.54) for Kilmaire and (.52) for U.S. classes. If we compare the U.S.

classes according to composition complexity level, we see more similarities. For Task Advice, the Advanced Total is (.05), the Intermediate total is (.07). For Reader Impact Advice the Intermediate total is (.27) and the Introductory total is (.26). For Writer Advice, the Intermediate total is (.22) and the Introductory total is (.18). For composition advice the Intermediate total is (.43) and the Introductory total is (.44). There are similarities within a school also. The proportion of advice on Format is similar for Central: Advanced Central (.06), Central 10A (.05) and Central 10B(.06). For mechanics, Advanced Central had (.18), Central 10A had (.21) and Central 10B had (.18).

Evaluation of the Letter of Advice Method

The letter of advice method of gathering data about composition goals, curriculum, instructional practices, teacher values and student perception looks promising, but it is not without problems. One problem is constructing the categories; it is a subjective process and the preliminary categories set forth here do not meet all the necessary category criteria. Some of the categories such as content overlap. Another problem is interpreting student hints and advice. It is difficult, for instance, to interpret what a student means when he says "Write clearly." It could mean to compose clearly or it could mean to use a clear, legible handwriting. Sometimes students use composition terms incorrectly, for instance giving advice to write a unified essay when they mean a coherent essay. An additional problem is knowing what to do with embedded advice. When five hints are asked for, but some students actually give eight hints, then what? Some way must be found to make sure five and only five hints

are given. It would be useful to have students rate the five hints in order of importance also see their priorities.

It is clear that much more pilot testing needs to be done with this methodology. Interrater reliability is needed also. But in spite of all the problems, it is hoped that this study succeeded in the attempt to devise a new, rich source of data about composition classrooms internationally.

Table 6

Proportion of Task Advice According to Composition Classes

TASK ADVICE / ASSIGNMENT	Composition Classes													
	Adv. Australia	Adv. Uni	Adv. Central U.S.	Adv. Total U.S.	Intermed. Oakwood J	Intermed. Oakwood II	Intermed. Central II	Intermed. Total U.S.	Introd. Central 10A	Introd. Central 10B	Introd. Total U.S.	Grand Total U.S.		
Understand it	.01													
Ask for clarification if unsure									*		*	*		
Do it/if in class, bring supplies					*			*	*			*		
Do all of it					*			*				*		
Comply strictly, answer the question	*	*	*	*			.01	*	*	.01	*	*		
Turn it in on time					*		*	*	.02		*	*		
Do in class if given class time					*			*						
FORMAT														
No fringe paper									*	*	*	*		
One side of paper										*	*	*		
Proper margins							.01	*						
Title page			.01	*	.01			*						
Name/date/class									*		*	*		
Proper headings										.01	*	*		
Lined-up, indented paragraphs							*	*		*	*	*		
Ink		.01		*	*	.01	*	*	.01	.02	.02	.01		
Type		*	.05	.02	*			*	.01	.01	.01	.01		
Double Space					*									
LENGTH														
3-5 Paragraphs	*	*		*								*		
200-500 words		*		*	*		*	*				*		

* = > .00 and < .01

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Table 1

Composite of Advice Letters, Advice Pieces and Average Advice Pieces per Letter for U.S. School and an Australian School Composition Classes

	Composition Classes													
	Adv. Australia	Adv. Uni	Adv. Central	Adv. Total	Intermed. Oakwood J	Intermed. Oakwood II	Intermed. Central II	Intermed. Total	Introd. Central 10A	Introd. Central 10B	Introd. Total	Total U.S.	Total U.S./Australia	
Total Advice Letters	30	40	18	58	15	10	25	50	28	29	57	165	195	
Total Advice Pieces	282	341	179	520	107	67	198	372	163	166	329	1221	1502	
Average Advice Pieces per Letter	9.9	8.5	9.9	9.0	7.1	6.7	7.9	7.4	5.8	5.7	5.8	7.4	7.7	

Table 2

Summary of Proportion of Advice Pieces According to Major Advice Type for U.S. Schools and an Australian School Composition Classes

Major Advice Type	Composition Classes													
	Adv. Australia	Adv. Uni	Adv. Central	Adv. Total U.S.	Intermed. Oakwood J	Intermed. Oakwood I I	Intermed. Central II	Intermed. Total U.S.	Introd. Central 10A	Introd. Central 10B	Introd. Total U.S.	Grand Total U.S.		
Task Advice Total	.02	.03	.07	.05	.14	.01	.05	.07	.12	.10	.11	.07		
Reader Impact Advice Total	.26	.21	.16	.19	.25	.44	.21	.27	.21	.31	.26	.23		
Writer Advice Total	.18	.11	.17	.13	.21	.10	.27	.22	.19	.17	.18	.17		
Composition Advice Total	.54	.65	.59	.63	.39	.43	.46	.43	.48	.41	.44	.52		

Table 3

Proportion of Major and SubAdvice Types for U.S. Schools and an Australian School Composition Classes

Advice Types and Subtypes	Composition Classes													
	Adv. Australia	Adv. Uni	Adv. Central	Adv. Total U.S.	Intermed. Oakwood J	Intermed. Oakwood I	Intermed. Central II	Intermed. Total U.S.	Introd. Central 10A	Introd. Central 10B	Introd. Total U.S.	Grand Total U.S.		
TASK ADVICE TOTAL	.02	.03	.07	.05	.14	.01	.05	.07	.12	.10	.11	.07		
Assignment	.02	*	*	*	.03		.01	.01	.04	.01	.02	.01		
Format		.01	.06	.03	.03	.01	.02	.03	.05	.06	.05	.03		
Length		.01	.01	*	.07		.01	.03	.03	.02	.02	.02		
READER IMPACT ADVICE TOTAL	.26	.21	.16	.19	.25	.44	.21	.27	.21	.31	.26	.23		
Appearance	*	.04	.03	.04	.05	.03	.02	.03	.10	.10	.10	.05		
Style/Tone	.25	.14	.11	.13	.15	.40	.18	.21	.10	.20	.15	.16		
Content	.01	.02	.01	.02	.05	.01	*	.02	.01	.01	.01	.01		
WRITER ADVICE TOTAL	.18	.11	.17	.13	.21	.10	.27	.22	.19	.17	.18	.17		
Teacher Politcs	.07	.04	.08	.05	.04	.01	.07	.05	.03	.09	.05	.05		
Composing/Class Attitudes	.01		.03	.01	.05	.01	.07	.05	.06	.03	.04	.03		
Content/Idea Source	.09	.06	.06	.06	.11	.07	.13	.11	.09	.05	.06	.08		
COMPOSITION ADVICE TOTAL	.54	.65	.59	.63	.39	.43	.46	.43	.48	.41	.44	.52		
Structure/Development	.30	.39	.29	.35	.06	.19	.21	.16	.19	.14	.16	.24		
Mechanics	.10	.14	.18	.16	.27	.10	.13	.17	.21	.18	.20	.17		
Process	.07	.08	.09	.08	.04	.03	.07	.06	.04	.06	.05	.07		
Unity	.03	.02	.01	.02	.01	.03	.03	.02	.03	.02	.03	.02		
Coherence	.06	.01	.01	.01	.01	.07	.02	.02	*	*	*	.01		

* = > .00 and < .01

Table 4

Proportion of Major Advice Types According to Composition Class Setting

School Setting for Composition Class	Advice Types			
	Task	Reader	Writer	Composition
U.S.				
Urban University Lab School				
Uni High School Advanced	.03	.21	.11	.65
Urban Public High School				
Central Advanced	.07	.16	.17	.59
Central II	.05	.21	.27	.46
Central 10A	.12	.21	.19	.48
Central 10B	.10	.31	.17	.41
Rural Public High School				
Oakwood Journalism	.14	.25	.21	.39
Oakwood II College Bound	.01	.44	.10	.43
Australia				
Urban Technical College				
Kilmire College Advanced	.02	.26	.18	.54

Table 5

Proportion of Advice SubTypes According to Composition Class Setting for U.S. Schools and an Australian School

School Setting for Composition Class	Advice Sub-Types: Task			Reader			Writer			Composition				
	Assignment	Format	Length	Appearance	Style/Tone	Content	Teacher Politcs	Composing/Class	Content/Idea Source	Structure/Develop	Mechanics	Process	Unity	Coherence
U.S.														
Urban University Lab School														
Uni High School Advanced	*	.01	.01	.04	.14	.02	.04		.06	.39	.14	.08	.02	.01
Urban Public High School														
Central Advanced	*	.06	.01	.03	.11	.01	.08	.03	.06	.29	.18	.09	.01	.01
Central II	.01	.02		.03	.21	.02	.05	.05	.11	.16	.17	.06	.02	.02
Central 10A	.04	.05	.03	.10	.10	.01	.03	.06	.09	.19	.21	.04	.03	*
Central 10B	.01	.06	.02	.10	.20	.01	.09	.03	.05	.14	.18	.06	.02	*
Total Central	.02	.05	.02	.06	.15	.01	.07	.05	.08	.20	.18	.06	.02	.01
Rural Public High School														
Oakwood Journalism	.03	.03	.01	.05	.15	.15	.04	.05	.11	.06	.27	.04	.01	.01
Oakwood II College Bound		.01	.07	.03	.40	.01	.01	.01	.07	.19	.10	.03	.03	.07
Total Oakwood	.02	.02	.04	.04	.24	.03	.03	.04	.09	.11	.20	.04	.02	.03
Australia														
Technical College														
Killmarie Advanced	.02			*	.25	.01	.07	.01	.09	.30	.10	.07	.03	.06
Total U.S. Urban Summary														
Uni High School	*	.01	.01	.04	.14	.02	.04		.06	.39	.14	.08	.02	.01
Central High School Classes	.02	.05	.02	.06	.15	.01	.07	.05	.08	.20	.18	.06	.02	.01
Total Rural High School														
Oakwood High School Classes	.02	.02	.04	.04	.24	.03	.03	.04	.09	.11	.20	.04	.02	.03

* = > .00 and < .01

TASK ADVICE (Cont.)	Adv. Australia	Adv. Uni	Adv. Central	Adv. Total U.S.	Intermed. Oakwood J	Intermed. Oakwood II	Intermed. Central II	Intermed. Total U.S.	Introd. Central-10A	Introd. Central 10B	Introd. Total U.S.	Grand Total U.S.		
Correct amount of words/pages									*		*	*		
1½ - 4 pages	*		*	*			*	*				*		
As much as possible									*			*		
Lengthy	*	*		*	.05		*	.01	*	.02		*		
Paragraphs of 2+ sentences									*			*		
Total Assignment	.02	*	*	*	.03		.01	.01	.04	.01	.02	.01		
Total Format		.01	.06	.03	.03	.01	.02	.03	.05	.06	.05	.03		
Total Length	.01	.01	*	.01	.07		.01	.03	.02	.02	.02	.02		
Grand Total	.03	.03	.07	.05	.14	.01	.05	.07	.12	.10	.11	.07		

* = > .00 and < .01

Table 7

Proportion of Impact on Reader Advice According to Composition Class

IMPACT ON READER ADVICE	Composition Classes													
APPEARANCE	Adv. Australia	Adv. Uni	Adv. Central	Adv. Total U.S.	Intermed. Oakwood J	Intermed. Oakwood II	Intermed. Central II	Intermed. Total U.S.	Introd. Central 10A	Introd. Central 10B	Introd. Total U.S.	Grand Total U.S.		
Neat--no wrinkles/scratch outs	*	.02	.02	.02	.03	.01	.01	.01				.01		
Legibility		.02	*	.01	.02	.01	.01	.01	.10	.10	.10	.03		
TONE/STYLE/EXPRESSION														
Tone	.01													
Humorous	*									*	*	*		
Serious/no humor	.01	*		*								*		
Sincere	*	*		*								*		
Realistic/Reasonable									*		*	*		
Firm/Positive	.01													
Objective/both sides	*		*	*	*			*				*		
Third person (no first, second person)							.02	.01						
Non-radical		*		*								*		
Interpersonal/reader-based	.02	*		*	*	.03		*		*	*	*		
Formal	*	*		*			*	*		.01	*	*		
Semiformal			*	*								*		
Style/presentation	.02	.01		*	.02			*		*	*	*		
Concise/non-wordy	*	.02	.01	.01	.02	.11	.03	.04	*	.01	*	.02		
Clear/explanatory	.04	.01	.01	.01	.03	.04	.03	.03	.01	.04	.03	.02		
Non-repetitive	.01		*	*		.02	*	*	.01	.01	.01	*		
Genre appropriate/expository	*					.01		*				*		
Feeling/expressiveness	*	*							.01	*	*	*		

* = > .00 and < .01

IMPACT ON READER ADVICE (Cont.)	Adv. Australia	Adv. Uni	Adv. Central	Adv. Total U.S.	Intermed. Oakwood J	Intermed. Oakwood II	Intermed. Central II	Intermed. Total U.S.	Introd. Central 10A	Introd. Central 10B	Introd. Total U.S.	Grand Total U.S.		
Lively/colorful/imagable		*	.01	.01	.02	.10	.04	.05		*	*	.01		
Original/imaginative/interesting		.01	*	.01	.02	.01	*	.01	.03	.02	.03	.01		
Explicit/direct	.02	*	*	*			*	*		.02	.01	*		
Consistent	*	*		*			*	*				*		
Even					*			*				*		
Active voice		*	.01	*			.01	*				*		
Varied		.01	.01	.01						*	*	*		
Controlled	*													
Vocabulary														
Appropriate	*		.01	*		.01	.01	*	.01	*	*	*		
Precise/use dictionary, thesaurus	.01	*	*	*		.03	.01	.01		.02	.01	*		
Extensive		*		*								*		
Mature/technical	.01	*	*	*					*	*	*	*		
Simple/plain	.02													
CONTENT														
Interesting/relevant/important	.01	.02	.01	.02	.14	.01	*	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01		
Total Appearance	*	.04	.03	.04	.05	.03	.02	.03	.10	.10	.10	.05		
Total Tone/Style/Expression	.25	.14	.11	.13	.15	.40	.18	.21	.10	.20	.15	.16		
Total Content	.01	.02	.01	.02	.15	.01	*	.02	.01	.01	.01	.01		
Grand Total Impact on Reader	.26	.21	.16	.19	.25	.44	.21	.27	.21	.31	.26	.23		

* = > .00 and < .01

Table 8

Proportion of Writer Advice According to Composition Classes

WRITER ADVICE / TEACHER POLITICS	Composition Classes													
	Adv. Australia	Adv. Uni	Adv. Central	Adv. Total U.S.	Intermed. Oakwood J	Intermed. Oakwood II	Intermed. Central II	Intermed. Total U.S.	Introd. Central 10A	Introd. Central 10B	Introd. Total U.S.	Grand Total U.S.		
Know teacher personality			*	*	*			*		.01	*	*		
Know teacher expectations/idiosyncracies	.01	*	.01	.01			.02	.01				*		
Know teacher beliefs, desires, values	.02	*	.01	*		.01	.01	*		*	*	*		
Agree with teacher stance/don't agree	.01									.01	*	*		
Pick topic interesting to teacher		*		*	*		*	*				*		
Impress teacher/be political	.01	*	.01	*						*	*	*		
Use no humor, jokes		.01		*								*		
Pretend teacher knows all answers		*		*								*		
Listen to teacher					*			*				*		
Imitate and model teacher			*	*								*		
Take notes on teacher's lectures					*			*				*		
Use teacher examples & arguments/support														
Assume teacher believes cont. most imp.														
Be nice to teacher/friendly							*	*	.01		*	*		
Oppose tactfully		*		*								*		
Don't argue with teacher, or be a snot					*			*	*		*	*		
Ask teacher for advice/help							.01	*				*		
Don't act as equal or superior									*		*	*		
Fake sophistication										*	*	*		
Be vague, general, broad	.01		*	*						.01	*	*		
Be specific enough for interest/narrow		*		*						*	*	*		

* = > .00 and < .01

WRITER ADVICE (Cont.)	Adv. Australia	Adv. Uni	Adv. Central	Adv. Total U.S.	Intermed. Oakwood J	Intermed. Oakwood II	Intermed. Central II	Intermed. Total U.S.	Introd. Central 10A	Introd. Central 10B	Introd. Total U.S.	Grand Total U.S.		
Talk in circles--say nothing										*	*	*		
Don't use radical, revolution/be radical	*									*	*	*		
Don't mention political parties										.01	*	*		
Don't "con" with fancy words							*	*				*		
Get teacher to like you		*		*			*	*				*		
Understand teacher's teaching system														
Consider teacher/self interests as 50/50							*	*				*		
Let teacher know your weak points			*	*								*		
Fake it, use primer style/be naive			*	*								*		
Expect English/content teacher differenc.			*	*								*		
No tear-jerkers, unless teacher likes	*													
Don't leave loopholes in your argument	*													
COMPOSING/CLASS ATTITUDES														
Be positive, serious about learning	*		*	*			*	*	.03	.01	.02	*		
Put effort into work/try your best/study	*		.01	*	.02		.04	.02	.01	.01	.01	.01		
Allow enough time for quality	*		*	*	.02	.01		.01	.01		*	*		
Don't rebel against criticism			*	*								*		
Use classroom time wisely					*		*	*				*		
Budget for in-class essays							*	*				*		
Pretend interest in class even if dull							*	*				*		

* = > .00 and < .01

WRITER ADVICE (Cont.)

CONTENT OF COMPOSITION	Adv. Australia	Adv. Uni	Adv. Central	Adv. Total U.S.	Intermed. Oakwood J	Intermed. Oakwood II	Intermed. Central II	Intermed. Total U.S.	Introd. Central 10A	Introd. Central 10B	Introd. Total U.S.	Grand Total U.S.		
Choose a topic interesting to you		*	*	*	*	.01	.01	.01				*		
Choose a topic that makes you look good		*								.01	*	*		
Choose a topic you believe in	*													
Choose a safe topic		*		*								*		
Know the subject well		.02	.02	.02	.02	.01	.03	.02	.03	.01	.01	.02		
Use own personal experiences, views	.01	.01	*	.01	*		.01	.01	.01	*	*	.01		
Use other people, books, library/research	.03		*	*	.02		.05	.03	.03	.01	.01	.01		
Use recent sources					*	.01		*				*		
Make up content		*		*								*		
Don't copy, plagiarize/credit others	.01	*	*	*	*		*	*	.01	.01	.01	*		
Use commonsense, obvious if unsure/topic							*	*				*		
If bland topic, be moderately competent							*	*				*		
Be non-phoney/fake interest		*		*		.02		*	*		*	*		
If literature essay, define words			*	*								*		
Make bold assertions	*		*	*								*		
Don't contradict yourself	*		*	*	.02			*				*		
Present both sides of an argument	.02													
Total Teacher Politics	.07	.04	.08	.05	.04	.01	.07	.05	.03	.09	.05	.05		
Total Composing/class attitudes	.01		.03	.01	.05	.01	.07	.05	.06	.03	.04	.03		
Total content/source of idea attitudes	.09	.06	.06	.06	.11	.07	.13	.11	.09	.05	.06	.08		
Grand Total Writer Advice	.18	.11	.17	.13	.21	.10	.17	.22	.19	.17	.18	.17		

* = > .00 and < .01

Table 9

Proportion of Composition Advice According to Composition Classes

COMPOSITION ADVICE	Composition Classes													
STRUCTURE/DEVELOPMENT	Adv. Australia	Adv. Uni	Adv. Central	Adv. Total U.S.	Intermed. Oakwood J	Intermed. Oakwood II	Intermed. Central II	Intermed. Total U.S.	Introd. Central 10A	Introd. Central 10B	Introd. Total U.S.	Grand Total U.S.		
Structure/order	.02	.05	.04	.04	.02	.01	.03	.02	.04		.02	.05		
Single thesis (main idea, theme)	*	.06	.03	.05		.01	.03	.01	*		*	.05		
Preview of composition content/plan	.02	.01	*	.01				.03				.01		
Introduction	.02	*	.01	*				.01	.02		.01	.01		
Catchy introduction	*	*	*	*			.01	.03		*	*	*		
Introduction of topic/definition	.01	*	.01	*			*	.01		.01	*	*		
Introduction of thesis	*	.02	*	.01			*	.04				.01		
Body	*	.01	.01	.01			*	.04	*	*	*	.01		
Main ideas/points/thesis support	.02	.02	.01	.01			.01	.06				.01		
Major support-paragraphs (2-3) (3-5)	*	*	*	*			*	*				*		
Strongest point last/arrangement	*	*	.01	*				*				*		
Based on personal experience			*	*				*				*		
Based on experts outside school			*	*				*	*		*	*		
One main idea in paragraph/topic sent.	.02	.01	.01	.01				.03	*		*	.01		
Strong adequate evidence/details	.02	.03		.02	.02	.04	.03	.03	.03	*	.01	.03		
Minor support							*		*		*	*		
Specific examples	.01	.04	.02	.04						.01	*	.03		
Personal examples									*		*	*		
Appropriate examples	.01	*		*				*				*		
Quotes/comparisons	.01													
Sound reasons	.01	.01		*		.01	*	.03		*	*	.01		

* = > .00 and < .01

COMPOSITION ADVICE (Cont.)	Adv. Australia	Adv. Uni	Adv. Central	Adv. Total U.S.	Intermed. Oakwood J	Intermed. Oakwood II	Intermed. Central II	Intermed. Total U.S.	Introd. Central 10A	Introd. Central 10B	Introd. Total U.S.	Grand Total U.S.		
Accurate facts/facts	*	*	.01	*		.01	*	*	*	.02	.01	*		
Conclusion	.01	.01	.01	.01			*	*	.01	*	*	.01		
Memorable/twist conclusion			*	*		.01	.01	*				*		
Summarize/restate conclusion	.01	.01	.01	.01			.01	*	*	.01	.01	.01		
Extend thesis conclusion	*	.01	.01	.01								*		
Synthesizing conclusion	*	*		*			.01	*	*		*	*		
Sentence structure, proper, varied	.01		.01	*	*	.07	.01	*	.02	.03	.03	.01		
MECHANICS														
Punctuation	.03	.03	.06	.04	.07	.01	.05	.05	.05	.06	.06	.05		
Spelling	.03	.04	.06	.05	.09	.01	.03	.05	.11	.08	.09	.06		
Grammar/usage	.03	.05	.02	.04	.08	.07	.04	.06	.05	.03	.04	.04		
Avoid verb/parallel str./conj. problems		*	.01	*	.02		*	*		*	*	*		
Avoid ambiguities, misplaced words		*	*	*								*		
PROCESS														
Brainstorm, list ideas	.01	*	*	*						*	*	*		
Ask questions							.01	*				*		
Think/prepare							.01	*		.01	*	*		
Select/narrow topic		*	.03	.01						*	*	*		
Decide on an approach							*	*				*		
Select/narrow thesis		*		*										
Outline	.02	.02	.01	.02	*	.01	.01	.01	*		*	*		

* = > .00 and < .01

COMPOSITION ADVICE (Cont.)	Adv. Australia	Adv. Uni	Adv. Central	Adv. Total U.S.	Intermed. Oakwood J	Intermed. Oakwood II	Intermed. Central II	Intermed. Total U.S.	Introd. Central 10A	Introd. Central 10B	Introd. Total U.S.	Grand Total U.S.		
Incubation		*		*										
Multiple drafts	.02	.02	.01	.02	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		
Another's critique	*		.01	*	*			*				*		
Revision		*		*			*	*				*		
Proofread/Edit		.01	.02	.02	.02	.01	.02	.01	.02	.03	.02	.05		
UNITY														
Stick to topic/thesis	.03	.02	.01	.02		.03	.02	.01	.03	.02	.02	.02		
COHERENCE														
Transitions	*	*	.01	*		.01	*	*		*	*	*		
Flow of ideas		*	*	*		.06	.01	.01				*		
Logical	.02								*		*			
Total structure/development	.30	.39	.29	.35	.06	.19	.21	.16	.19	.14	.16	.24		
Total mechanics	.10	.14	.18	.15	.27	.10	.13	.17	.21	.18	.20	.17		
Total process	.07	.08	.09	.08	.04	.03	.07	.06	.04	.06	.05	.07		
Total unity	.03	.02	.01	.02	.01	.03	.03	.02	.03	.02	.03	.02		
Total coherence	.06	.01	.01	.01	.01	.07	.02	.02	*	*	*	.01		
Grand Total Composition	.54	.65	.59	.63	.39	.43	.46	.43	.48	.41	.44	.52		

* = > .00 and < .01